

# **The construction of cultural and religious identities in the temple architecture**

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Cultural and religious identity is constructed in works of art. These processes will be considered in the example of Indian Islamic art. Religious art is representative of religions concept. Indian mausoleums, which were created during the reign of Mughal represent features of Indian Islam. Art analysis and philosophical interpretation of signs and images of Indian mausoleums helps to understand the unique features of Indian Islam. Religious Islamic art in India continues to have an impact on the recipients in the present. The art works of Islamic architecture can be studied as cultural texts. The ideals, values and standards of Islam are of architectural form. Indian Islam has unique cultural features. These cultural ideals, values and standards not set out in the treatises and books. Features of Indian Islam can be understood if we explore the features of Indian architecture of the Great Mughals' Era. The Indian mausoleums are representing of unique qualities of Indian Islam of this historical period. The inside and outside interior of the Great Mughals' mausoleums, as well as their environment, represent together the fact of achieving Heaven and the process itself, as well as the guide for people beholding the architecture, which would help to get in Heaven with grace of Allah. Indian mausoleums of the Great Mughals' Era can well be called as architecture representatives of the Islamic religion. The cultural-semiotic analysis of these architectural sites shows. That its visualize basic principles of Islam, including hard way of man towards Allah together with Heaven's achieving. The article presents a cultural-semiotic analysis of these architectural objects. It is proved that cultural and religious identities are constructed through the perception of architectural objects.

**Keywords:** Cultural and Religious Identities, Islamic Architecture, Mausoleums, Great Mughals.

## **Introduction**

The year 1192 was a significant date in the history of India. Mohhamad, a Turk commander born in the Seljuks tribe, together his armed troops conquered the coalition of Indian rulers in the Tarin flatland, north of Delhi. As the result, the Muslim culture including arts, flooded in India together with Arab conquerors.

The Islam brought cult architecture in India, the main types of which were formed by the end of the 8th century, i.e. long before the conquest of India. The Muslim architecture was basically represented by three main complexes: a mosque, minaret and mausoleum (tomb). This article is dedicated to mausoleums. A mausoleum is a monumental tomb construction, originating from the tomb of Mausolus, the ruler of Caria, in Halicarnassus (4th century B.C.). Although Islam implies a traditional burying in graves, with facing to Mecca, the mausoleum in Muslim countries grabs the attention of architects.

Works of the Muslim architecture represents Islam. They are cultural texts which reflect specific features of the Islamic worldview, of the historic period when they were created, and the artistic thinking of Muslim architects. The cultural-semiotic and art analysis of the Islamic architecture will allow us to understand the specific character of the history of Islam in Hindustan as well as how the Islamic religion developed in this particular era. Undoubtedly, the Islamic architecture enriched the

culture in Hindustan. Some significant sites of the Islamic architecture established in the Middle Ages in the territory of Hindustan, represent masterpieces of the world architecture. The study of these sites provides better comprehending of features of the modern Islamic culture, since today's state is considered to be the result of a particular historic process.

### **Theoretical framework**

The history of Islamic architecture in India has a long tradition. As a rule, researchers use the method of historic chronology and outline stages in the history of Islamic culture; describe the most outstanding sites, which were built in this or that period. Such approach is typical for art experts who analyze the Islamic architecture of the medieval India (Tadgel, 1990; Brown, 2013; Grover, 1981; Grover, 1996; Bloom, 1997, et other). The Islamic architecture in India is also considered within the general history of Hindustan arts (Havell, 1913; Coomaraswamy, 1927; Prammar, 2005; Mitter, 2001; Tillotson, 1989; Harle, 1994; Dehejia, 1997; Roth and Klark, 2013; Volwahren, 1970, and other). The tradition to identify mausoleums as a special type of the Indo-Islamic architecture appeared early on (Butler, 1906). Indo-Islamic mausoleums became a subject matter for many scientists (Porter and Gegeorge, 2009; Alfieri and Asher, 1994, and other). Specific features in the architecture of mausoleums are impossible to be understood beyond the historical context taken part in Hindustan within the period of mausoleums building, i.e. in the era of the Great Mughals (Khosla, 1934; Commissariat, 1957; Ikram, 1989; Koch, 1991; Subrahmanyam, 1992; Richards, 1993; Habib, 1980, and other).

The Islamic architectural masterpieces of the Great Mughals have been studied as sites of the historic period (Nath, 1972, 1976; Mehta, 1976; Saraswati, 1953; Husain, 1970; Sanwal, 1968, and other). Presumably, it is time to analyze these works of art as cultural texts, where the Islamic religion visually expressed its principles.

### **Study methods**

Clifford Geertz defined the culture as a system of cultural texts creating a "network of meanings" (Geertz, 1973). Regarding this, one may suggest that masterpieces of the Islamic architecture during the Great Mughals period represent cultural texts with different coded meanings which are related to Islam. Consequently, due to the analysis one can "read" these meanings and find out some reasons why these historic works play a crucial role in the contemporary Islam. To "read" cultural meanings implied in the architecture, we need to: 1) understand which historical events were the most significant within the period when the sites were built, i.e. in the era of the Great Mughals; 2) outline architectural works which accumulate cultural meanings of that era (including together with mosques and minarets also mausoleums); 3) carry out a philosophic and art analysis of these architecture marvels aiming at revealing the methods of visualization of the most outstanding principles of the Islamic religion (as the example of such analysis, we have considered the studies by Vladimir Zhukovsky (2014); 4) make the content of these principles clear.

### **Historical events which caused the appearance of Islamic architecture in Hindustan**

The Muslim troops came to the territory of Hindustan in the very end of the 12th century. Step by step, they moved to the East and South. Islam bucked up Hindustan. It infused new live on this territory and gave an impulse to the society that had already almost lost the ability to any improvements. A new phenomenon in the world culture, the Indo-Muslim art, appeared. Indian masters and constructors were

inspired by new ideas brought by Islam. During Mahmud's reign, Al-Biruni, an outstanding scientist and philosopher, came also to Punjab. He mastered Sanskrit and read all the main philosophic, scientific and art books written by Hindus by himself. Over some time a unique synthesis of the Hindu and Muslim cultures aroused.

In the beginning of the 13th century the ruins of the Ghurid Sultanate became a ground for the development of the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526). In the end of the 14th century this Sultanate was conquered by Timur's armed forces. In the autumn of 1298, Timur sized Delhi and ravaged it, and then turned back to Samarkand. Thus, Delhi was almost razed. In 50 years this city became the major sultan's palace again, but it was a small state, which could not be compared with large countries of the South, West and East of Hindustan.

Sultans were descents of Afghanistan: due to their almost full political disability, Afghan grand people were exasperated, as so they invited a foreigner to rule the state. This foreigner's name was Babur, a Mughal, who ruled in Kabul that time. Having won Ibrahim Lodi's 40-thousandth troops in the First battle of Panipat, near Delhi, Babur in 1526 conquered the Empire of Hindustan. The young great empire well-known as the Empire of Mughals appeared, and Delhi rose once again being the capital of this state. The era of Mughals continued from 1526 to 1707, i.e. 181 years. The Great Mughals dynasty was well famous in the whole Asia and Europe. All in all, there were six outstanding rules in this dynasty, and then the Empire came apart and Marathas together with Sikhs found there their own state.

The first ruler from the Great Mughals – Babur – was a direct descendent from the family of Genghis Khan and Timur. He died in 1530. The next person to whom Babur bequeathed his empire was Humayun, a man of education and culture, but not of a war. In 1540, Shere-Khan, the ruler of Afghan, defeated and exiled him. The second Great Mughals' Emperor became a tramp, who had to live a vagabond life and suffer all kinds of asperities. During such life in 1542 his wife gave a birth to his son named Akbar, who over some time was known as the Great.

In 1555 Humayun came back to Hindustan together with the Persian forces, and achieved the victory over Shere-Khan, and thus after 16 years became a ruler of Delhi again. Akbar was 13 years old when his father died and he became a governor. In his 17, he ousted from power his regent, and became an absolute Emperor.

During his reign the dynasty of Mughals found its feet in Hindustan, the title "Great Mughals" entered the European vocabulary. As a ruler, Akbar arrived to the decision that his power and the power of his nation depended on integration. Thus, Akbar conquered the whole North and South of Hindustan; he won wars in the Central and South India, as well as laid under tributes all the defeated people.

Initially, Akbar chose the city of Agra as the capital for his state and built a castle there. After that, he built a new town called Fatehpur Sikri, just about 28 km from Agra. He decided on this place, because it was the living place for Sheikh Salim Chishti, a Sufi. Akbar established there a marvelous town, which served as the capital for 15 years. Then, Lahore took his place.

After Akbar's reign, his son Jahangir was enthroned in the Empire, and to some degree he succeeded tradition of his father. Still, the main focus of his interest was on arts, gardens and literature rather than on the policy. It was the period when the Tomb of I'timad-ud-Daulah – a crown of the Indo-Muslim architecture – was built.

After Jahangir, for another 30 years the state was ruled by his son Shah Jahan (1627–1658). He was a contemporary of Louis the Fourteenth: during his reign, The Mughals achieved their strength, but at the same time first marks of their further decline also occurred. The Peacock Throne decorated with precious gems was built for the Emperor. On the bank of the Jumma-river, the Taj Mahal was established. The

architecture of the Great Mughals in this period achieved the peak of its development.

Islam in the era of the Great Mughals was set in different ways. One of the most harmonic and socially attractive methods was the appearance of masterpieces of the Islamic architecture. Works of the Indo-Islamic architecture created during this era were masterpieces not only of the local culture, but for the world one as well. At the same time, these architectural sites are impossible to be understood without thinking about the fact that they are the place where Islam found its artistic and semiotic expression. The further analysis shall show which principles of Islam were fulfilled in mausoleums, which possess these principles up to the present time for people.

### **The cultural-semiotic and art analysis of mausoleums which represent Islam of the Great Mughals period**

Mausoleum (tomb) is one of those three types of the Muslim architecture (alongside with mosques and minarets), which made its appearance in the territory of Hindustan when Islam entered there. Being an architectural construction, the mausoleum has many common features. The central hall of it is usually of a cubic form (koubba) and covered with a domelike ceiling. The way from a quadrate to round is handled through the eight-square cylinder where the arch and semi-dome in the corners of koubba transform the quadrate into octagon. The mausoleum is usually located in the center of the char bagh (a garden divided into other four gardens) on the cross of four raised parkways by which the water flows. Such a place represents an architectural perception about the Islamic Paradise. In the park's centre, a fountain of life plays: it is a source for four holly rivers. If a grave of any respectful Muslim person is located there, so the deceased is seemed to be given to the eternity embrace.

The Hindustan people thought about the first Muslim rulers as about aggressors and, thus, hated them. The conquerors felt themselves isolated in the huge world of Hinduism. That is why there is no surprise, that up to the 16th century the Muslim rulers, by establishing different cult construction, defended themselves with thick walls, blind windows, arches and low huge domes.

For example, tombs built in Muhhamad Tughluq's period (1325–1351), look low and squat. Their severe appearance like a defensive structure, express some kind of a threat. Not without this reason in 13–15th centuries in India such kind of tombs as "castle" were of great popularity. Among them there were the Tomb of Sikandar Lodi in Lodhi's Gardens built in Delhi in 1517, and Tomb of Sher Shah Suri (1540–1545) in Sasaram (state of Bihar).

In the turn of the 17th century, the castle type of mausoleums dried up its popularity, as well as the form of low and wide dome of tombs. At that time Muslim rulers didn't count themselves as conquerors, but as legal owners of Hindustan's territories. Their family tombs stopped to look like defensive complexes. A new type of mausoleums in the Indo-Muslim architecture was represented by the Tomb of Mohammed Adil Shah (completed in 1660) in Bijapur widely known as Gol Gumbaz ("Round Dome").

The architecture of the Great Mughals period, from Babur (1483–1530) to Aurangzeb (1658–1707) is represented to its fullest and brightest extent in such cities as Fatehpur Sikri, Delhi and Agra. In the next part we will consider sites of the Muslim architecture introducing each of these cities.

Fatehpur Sikri ("City of Victory") was founded and built by the famous Emperor Akbar (1556–1605) who was not only a talented ruler and commander, but also arts lover. Under Akbar's active guidance within a decade (1569–1580) instead of the Sikri settlement the most beautiful in the whole Great Mughals' dynasty city appeared, with its gorgeous cult buildings made from stones, with palaces and palace

complexes from rotten rock. Fatehpur Sikri is an image of architectural ideal for Akbar. In the present time, it looks the same as in Akbar's period. In 1586 Akbar moved to Lahore, closer to the rebellious northwest border with Afghanistan, and together with his leaving the city became empty.

In the ancient times, Fatehpur Sikri had 9 gates, among which only "Agra Gates", a remarkable architectural example, have been preserved in the best way possible. The cathedral mosque in Fatehpur, Jama Masjid (1572), has a

yard surfaced with white marble blocks. This yard is enriched with two beautiful buildings: the Tomb of Salim Chishti and the Tomb of Islam Khan.

### **The Tomb of Salim Chishti, 1580–1582, Fatehpur Sikri**

The tomb of Sufi hollen Salim Chishti (1478–1572) who predicted the birth of Akbar's son is the last building in Jama Masjid ensemble. It includes Jama Masjid Mosque (1571–1575) (Fig. 1), a four-cornered yard (350x440 ft), bounded from the sides with a high thick wall (involving rooms for pilgrims and novitiates), Boland Darwaza ("Gates of Magnificence") (1576) (Fig. 2), Badshahi Darwaza ("Emperor's Gates") (Fig. 3) and two mausoleums near the northern wall – Tombs of Islam Khan (Fig. 4) and Salim Chishti. The whole complex was built by Akbar: Buland Darwaza was dedicated to the victory over Gujarat; the Tomb of Salim Chishti – in commemoration of the holy man, who predicted the birth of his son. Jama Masjid's palace-court includes a small artificial pond; the other one, little bit larger, eight-cornered, is placed near the wall-face of the ensemble, close to Buland Darwaza.

Even the first fleet glance at this complex allows us to note quite a considerable difference between the Tomb of Salim Chishti and other structures: it concerns the basic material. Up to the palace-court surfacing, Jama Masjid is made from the rotten rock, and only the Tomb of Salim Chishti is performed from the white marble.

Having been planned as a square (Fig. 5), the tomb stands on the basis of almost half of human scale, going out over the edge of the main square so as one can go round the Tomb along the walls there. Rising walls of the basis are decorated with geometric patterns laid of yellow and black marble. The cantilevered part of the basis is kept by steps fronted with white marble as well as the part of palace-court of Jama Masjid, just near the Tomb's entrance (Fig. 6) The building has a single floor, flat roof in the centre of which a semi-round dome is placed on a relatively low eight-cornered fundament. A raking cornice equal to the width of the basis starts from the roof and goes along all the sides of square and entrance portico. It is supported by snake-like console tables (Fig. 7) transferring the weight of cornice to pillars between the Tomb's windows across and also to columns of the entrance portico. The upper side of semi-round dome is encircled by a horizontal rim from small lotus leaves, above them by longer leaves fanned out form the spire. Comparatively low spire is made from metal and comprised of spherical and oblate round elements. The ending of spire is a sphere, changing in the upper part into an ogived element resembling a spear point. The interior environment is decorated by mother-of- pearl incrustation, color marble and ornamental stone of different rocks.

The spaces between console winds, as well as window reveals, are filled with stone carved works called djali. Windows reveals are vertical rectangles with integrated lancet arches. From the outside, these reveals seem to be impenetrable patterned panels with interchanging white and dark gray elements. From the Tomb's interior the Jama Masjid's environment is well visible through the thin patterned djali (Fig. 8 and 9). In other words, we can say about a one-directional vision insight through the reveals: one can see the palace-court only being inside. Still, one should make some effort to do this, since that thin and fine pattern grabs the attention not in a less degree, than the space outside.

### **The Tomb of I'timad-ud-Daulah ("Support of the State"), 1622–1628, Agra**

This mausoleum is a gorgeous architectural brilliant in Agra, dedicated to the father of a beloved, powerful and elegant wife of the Jahangir named Nur Jahan, who ordered to build this tomb. It is known that Jahangir addicted to wine and opium, left the ruling into the hands of his wife, Nur Jahan, a Persian princess, who ruled the Empire of the Great Mughals till the death of her husband and proved deep influence on the artistic sense of this era.

The Tomb is situated in the centre of rectangular, geometrically planned yard – char bagh – at the main accesses and water conducts. The yard is encircled with the wall having four gates, which include rooms for guests in particular. From three sides the Tomb has quite a high wall, the fourth side, facing the Yamuna River, is bordered with lower wall that creates an impression of full turn of the Tomb to the river (Fig. 10). The same as it was with the Tomb of Salim Chishti in Jama Masjid, the Tomb I'timad-ud-Daulah differs from other buildings there by its material: it is made of white marble, but its walls and gates are from rotten rock (gates are just decorated with white marble) (Fig. 11).

The Tomb (Fig. 12) is placed on a double basis, each of them is a meter in height and done from the rotten rock. The lower basis merges into garden's paths, in the centre of which water conducts are placed. The upper basis cantilevers over the mausoleums much significantly rather than in the Tomb of Salim Chishti. In particular, the basis of this Tomb is surrounded by fountains from all the four sides; each of these fountains introduces the entrance to the Tomb. The walls are decorated with geometrical stone mosaic. The mausoleum represents a square in its plane including four entrances in the centre of each side. In each corner of this square four eight-cornered minarets are built. The first floor is divided into nine rooms; each corner room is a place for cenotaphs. The first floor is also covered with a flat roof fenced with a balcony balustrade.

In the centre of terrace in the first floor another square hall overarched by a dome with four bend ribs can be found. The form of this hall and its dome mediate a considerably cantilevered raking cornice. The dome ends by downgoing lotus leaves. The upper square part of the dome is ornamented with spires in the corners decorated with ball-shaped and floral elements. In the middle of the second floor, eight-face minarets become round. The third tier of minarets – chattri – begins at the level of dome. Semi-circle domes of chattri end, as well as the central dome, with lotus leaves and spires with balls and floral elements. In height these minarets are larger than its total volume.

The walls and floor of the Tomb (Fig. 13–16) are incrustated with semi-precious ornamental stones: jasper, carnelian, onyx and etc. Incrustation is represented by geometrical and floral ornaments. Window areas are filled with tasteful stone jali-lattice (Fig. 17) and they have contours of lancet arches as well as entrances.

### **Taj Mahal, 1632–1648 (1653?), in Agra**

The mausoleum Taj Mahal is situated on the bank of the Yamuna near Agra. This remarkable site represents a crown of the Indo-Islamic architecture. It is dedicated to Arjumand Banu, Shah Jahan's beloved wife, known as Mumtaz Mahal ("Favored by the Court"), who died in childbirth.

It was built by unknown architect, although researchers suggested a number of ideas. They gave names of two brothers, architects, Ustad Ahmad and Ustad Hamid, who probably were born in Persia judging by their title of honor – "ustad" ("master"); other analysts consider Ustad Muhammad Isa, a Turk born in Byzantine, to be the

author of the mausoleum's project; sometimes the name of Geronimo Veroneo, a Venetian, can be found among other architects as well as the name of the Father Sebastiano Manrique, a Spanish Augustinian, and of Augustin de Bordeaux; it is also suggested, that an active part in development of the mausoleum was taken by Shah Jahan himself, as he ordered the building of his wife's tomb, and besides architecture was his favorite and the most familiar art. Presumably, each of the mentioned authors had a certain task in some part of the whole work. There is some information that in general, not less than 20 thousand people were responsible for the construction of different ensemble's sides.

The mausoleum is a part of the whole complex which includes a geometrically planned quadrate char bagh fenced with a high wall; gates are placed in the center of each side (Fig. 18); entrance pavilions are in the western and eastern walls; the mosque (Fig. 19) and the hotel are situated on the mausoleum's sides. The same as in the case of the Tomb of Salim Chishti and I'timad-ud-Daulah, only the very building of Taj Mahal is made of the white marble; other structures are built from rotten rock with white marble incrustation or domes. Similarity to the Tomb of Salim Chishti can be found even in the position of the Tomb, i.e. near the northern wall of the inner court; and to I'timad-ud-Daulah is seen in the char bagh surrounded from three sides by high walls and a low fence from the side facing the shrinking river Yamuna (Fig. 20). The Taj Mahal is clearly seen from the opposite bank of the river, from the gardens which together with their geometrical plans resemble the char bagh of the mausoleum (Fig. 21). The mausoleum, as one of the city's architectural orienting point, is also well observed from other parts of Agra, i.e. from the Red Fort, urban roofs (Fig. 22) and etc.

The Taj Mahal (Fig. 23) is founded on the high white-marble plinth decorated with carvings, cantilevering far beyond the main building. In the corners one can find round in their plan minarets each of which represents a scalene octangle-square with cut corners (Fig. 24). The mausoleum consists of two floors (the entrance iwans embrace all the two floors), covered with a flat roof. In the middle of this flat slab a huge dome is placed on the round drum. A semi-round dome obtains onion-shaped contours due to downgoing lotus leaves set in its upper part and drawn together in the basis of spire. The spire includes ball-shaped elements. Domes of the same (but smaller in scale) construction, crown four chattras placed on sides of the main dome. The central dome and the spire are the highest point of the whole ensemble.

### **Mutual characteristics for all three mausoleums**

Having individually considered the construction of each mausoleum, we can outline some mutual features:

Firstly, there is a clear analogy between the mausoleum together with its environment and a pearl hidden in the mollusk. Such an analogy is caused, mainly by the material which was used for the construction. The mausoleum per se is built from the white marble (in the case of I'timad-ud-Daulah and Taj Mahal it was a makran marble, changing its color depending on the light), incrustated with semi-precious stones, that makes it look like an iridescent pearl. The perlaceous mausoleum is surrounded with red and brown walls and structures, like a pearl covered by the mollusk. A direct nearness to the water also draws the analogy with pearls. It might be an artificial pond inside and outside the palace (the Tomb of Salim Chishti), char bagh or the location on the river bank (the I'timad-ud-Daulah and Taj Mahal). Pearls are quite fragile, and fragility of the mausoleum is made by elegant djali.

Secondly, each mausoleum has a stepped way from a square form through an octagon towards a circle, and then to the point within the top down direction. It means that, as a rule. The mausoleum is founded on the basis square in its plan (or on two

bases); the main building represents the square or octagon; the drum of round dome is also eight-cornered. Such passes are presented in minarets: a square basis, equal to the total volume, octangular fundament that changes into cylindrical segments. Both domes and chattri of minarets end by spire verticals narrowing the basic square, eight-corner and the circle into one point.

Thirdly, the main dome in each of these mausoleums and some accompanying domes are finished with lotus leaves, the basis of which is represented by spires. Actually, the mausoleum's building seems to be growing from the turned down lotus.

Fourthly, lotus is not the only floral element in the architecture of mausoleums: the biggest part of walls and floors surfaces is taken by incrusts i.e. floral ornamentation (apart from quotations from the Quran and geometrical patterns).

Fifthly, the I'timad-ud-Daulah and Taj Mahal are accompanied by minarets which, as a rule, are perceived as attributes of mosques necessary for public prayers.

Sixthly, all the three mausoleums are characterized by open turn to the outside space. It is seen in the change of impenetrable, thin walls to djali lattices, and in absence of the thin and high wall as in cases of the I'timad-ud-Daulah and Taj Mahal, which would separate them from the Yamuna River. A low fence between buildings and the bank has almost stayed the same; the mausoleums are clearly observed from the opposite bank.

Seventhly, constructions located in a close proximity of the mausoleums, are supposed to be a place for pilgrims and/or obedient. It proves the fact that mausoleums represented not only and not so much a place of sorrow, as place of education and rest.

We can make a synthesis all the marked characteristics in the following way calling on the Quran's quotations and its interpretations.

The mausoleum representing a hidden in its walls of rotten rock, hollow pearl; decorated with floral ornaments and surrounded by geometrically planned garden, refers to descriptions of Heaven in the Quran and its interpretations. "Truly, a believer would have in the Heaven a tent of one hollow pearl, sixty miles in height. There will be the believer's wives, and he will visit them one by one, but they will not see each other" (Al-Ashqar, 2007: 186). The tent resembling a hollow pearl is open for the view both from the outside and inside: this would explain that massive walls were replaced by djali: "Truly, the Heaven has rooming houses, the appearance of which can be seen from the inside and the interior can be seen from the outside" (Al-Ashqar, 2007: 185). Together with such openness through djali, it is important for the pearl to be covered, giving that beauty mentioned in the Quran; in the case of mausoleums, it is their location inside yards surrounded by high thick walls (but with gates which easily can be opened, that is why that entails covering and not detachment or inaccessibility). The Quran not once says about covered pearls being an attribute of the Heaven: "They will be served by their young servants looking like covered pearls" (52:24); "Young girls looking like covered pearls and having big black eyes will be their wives" (56:22-23).

The Quran also mentions that the Heaven resembles gardens with rivers (there are four rivers, the same as channels in the char bagh): "Allah promised to believers, to both men and women, Gardens of Paradise where rivers flow and where they will stay forever" (9:72). One can also explain the use of marble as the main construction material, especially a makran one, characterized by not only the ability to gleam, but also to change its color depending on the light: "The Heaven has no sun, no moon, no day or night: about morning and evening hours they will know from the light gleamed from the Throne" (Al-Ashqar, 2007: 189). The establishment of mausoleums answering the description of buildings in Heaven, points out that for those who are buried there the Heaven has already come; their potential houses in the Hell have been destroyed. "Ibn Abu Hatim following Abu Hureira's words said that the Prophet had said: "Each



of you has two places: the one is in Heaven, the other one – in Hell. As for a believer, so his house in Heaven will stay, and the house in Hell will be destroyed” (Al-Ashqar, 2007: 205–206).

The Heaven expressed in this world turns out to be covered, but not fenced by an impenetrable wall from other people. The access is free for everyone, and one cannot just contemplate the house in Heaven from afar, but he can stay close to it as a pilgrim or an obedient; feel the atmosphere of Heaven in order to not miss the right way to achieve it. Such visits of Heaven are also claimed by muezzins standing at minarets which accompany mausoleums. The necessity in pilgrims and obedient is explained by the fact that helping them means committing peaceable things which a dead person continues to do on his way to Allah: “When a person dies, his acts stop except three of them: peaceable thing, behooving other people; knowledge, used by other people; and righteous son, who prays for his father” (Al-Ashqar, 2007: 178). The peaceable thing is a giving of pilgrim’s house; knowledge is an opportunity to study in a close proximity to the mausoleum; prays for the sake of deceased in particular (which are called for from minarets included into the mausoleum’s complex), lift not only to his descendents, but also to other grateful people.

Being near the mausoleum, its perception helps not only embrace the idea of Heaven, but connect with the belief of its possible achievement. This belief is based on perception of two directions, expressed in the structure of mausoleums: upward and downward. The first direction is represented by stair-stepping, by way across from the square through octagon to circle and then – to the point (upward direction). Here, we should note the stair-stepping itself referring to holy texts, as well as the symbolism of one and all. The stair-stepping in architecture has a direct analogy with the stair-stepping in Heaven: “The Heaven includes steps, placed one over another, and its residents will prevail one over another depending on those places, which they will take. Allah said: “For those who will come to him being a believer with peaceable things, the highest steps are prepared” (Ta-Ha, 75) (Al-Ashqar, 2007: 166). “Truly, the residents of the highest steps are seen by those who take lower steps, as a star rising in the horizon” (Al-Ashqar, 2007: 171). If we speak about the symbolism of one and all, then one is definitely Allah, the point caused by the whole upward direction. All can be considered through the symbol of 8, which is present in Quran, for example, in the description of Judgment: “Angels will stay on its edges, and eight of them will carry Allah’s Throne over themselves” (69:17); in the description of the Heaven’s structure: “Heaven has eight gates; one of them is called Ar-Rayyan. Through this gates only those will come who fasted” (Al-Ashqar, 2007: 163). Thus, squared settings are typical for the ordinary space, while eight-cornered, eight-faced and round are peculiar to Heaven.

The downward direction is initiated by a reversed lotus. Thus, on the one hand, the direction of a person to Heaven is quite real; moreover, there are some obvious examples of its achievement, i.e. examples of those who are buried in mausoleums. On the other hand, Heaven itself comes downward to the person, supports his direction, and finds its expression: “He sent down enough water from the heaven, and we brought life into the dead ground. In this way, you will be pull out the graves” (43:11). Presumably, lotus which crowns the mausoleum’s domes is “the extreme lotus” mentioned in Quran: “He has already seen another His downward near the Extreme Lotus, where the Adobe Garden is placed. At that time Lotus covered what should be covered (gold grasshopper, or groups of angels, or Allah’s judgment). His view was straight and clear, and he saw the greatest Ayatollah” (53:13- 18). “It is he who has prepared Eden’s gardens, where rivers flow” (al-Kahf, 31). The prophet described the rivers quite clearly and explicitly. Being enheavened, he has seen four rivers, beginning

at the Extreme Lotus (al-Shidra, al- Muntaha)” (Al-Ashqar, 2007: 180).

Having outlined the existence of two different directions, we should also say, that the downward direction is more important, since Heaven is not so much a reward for the life, as grace of Allah, the divine grace given to believers: “Heaven is a great goodness which a person is not able to achieve by his life. He can get in Heaven only by the grace of Allah. Muslim’s “Sahih” includes Abu-Hurairah’s hadith that the Prophet said: “None of you won’t enter Heaven judging by your life”. People asked: “Even you, the Prophet of Allah?” He answered: “Even me, if Allah would not be graceful to me” (Al-Ashqar, 2007: 228).

### **Conclusion**

The inside and outside interior of the Great Mughal’s mausoleums, as well as their environment, represent together the fact of achieving Heaven and the process itself, as well as the guide for people beholding the architecture, which would help to get in Heaven with the grace of Allah.

Indian mausoleums of the Great Mughal’s era can well be called as architecture representatives of the Islamic religion. The cultural-semiotic analysis of these architectural sites shows, that they visualize basic principles of Islam, including hard way of a man towards Allah together with Heaven’s achieving.

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### **Конструирование культурной и религиозной идентичностей в храмовой архитектуре**

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Культурная и религиозная идентичность конструируется в произведениях искусства. Рассмотрим эти процессы на примере индийского исламского искусства. Индийские мавзолеи, созданные во времена правления Великих Моголов, репрезентируют особенности индийского ислама. Художественный анализ и философская интерпретация знаков и изображений индийских мавзолеев помогают понять уникальные особенности индийского ислама. Религиозное исламское искусство в Индии продолжает оказывать влияние на реципиентов в

настоящем времени. Художественные произведения исламской архитектуры можно рассматривать как культурные тексты. Идеалы, ценности и стандарты ислама имеют архитектурную форму. Индийский ислам обладает уникальными культурными особенностями. Эти культурные идеалы, ценности и стандарты не изложены в трактатах и книгах. Особенности индийского ислама можно понять, если мы проанализируем особенности индийской архитектуры эпохи Великих Моголов. Индийские мавзолеи репрезентируют уникальные качества индийского ислама в этот исторический период. Внутренний и внешний облик мавзолеев Великих Моголов, а также окружающая среда, куда они вписаны, представляют собой совокупность фактов достижения Небес и самого этого процесса, а также выступают руководством для людей, созерцающих архитектуру, которые помогут попасть на Небеса с помощью Бога. Индийские мавзолеи эпохи Великих Моголов вполне можно назвать репрезентантами архитектуры исламской религии. Представлен культурно-семиотический анализ этих архитектурных объектов. Доказано, что культурная и религиозная идентичности конструируются с помощью восприятия архитектурных объектов.

**Ключевые слова:** культурная и религиозная идентичности, исламская архитектура, мавзолеи, Великие Моголы.